I believe that a number of adoptees have been in contact with you regarding the Inquiry and the (non)role adoptees seem to have played. I would like to add my voice to theirs.

There is a growing feeling among adoptees that we are invisible. Although we are stakeholders in the adoption process, I believe that we are disregarded by other stakeholder groups. Continued reference to us as babies is disrespectful, but in addition, I believe it is disempowering. There seems to be a (perhaps unacknowledged) dichotomy in how we are represented in the minds of non-adoptees. On one hand, it was a baby that was adopted and therefore if any harm was done, it was done to the baby. On the other, here are all these adults - adult adoptees who claim to have been harmed. But the harm was done to the baby, wasn't it? So why are these adults upset? Even mothers who gave us birth seem to have this attitude, and they make continued references to regaining the baby they lost, without seeming to understand that that baby is an adult now.

I understand that a certain mother's group has been lobbying to be given control of any compensation or support networks that the government might implement as an outcome of the Inquiry. I believe this would be a mistake. Certain mothers seem to believe, along with the rest of society, that we adoptees didn't suffer much from our adoptions, and therefore priority should be given to mothers whose babies were removed from them. We adoptees would be left out in the cold again if they were to be given control of compensatory measures. We have suffered by being adopted and we have suffered for our entire lifetimes. We still do suffer from being adoptees and shall do till our lives end.

In my work as a lecturer in psychology and counselling, I am including adoption loss as a topic for study so that the newest batch of counsellors will at least be aware of the issues faced by adoptees. I believe all those who work in the caring professions should be made aware of our unique issues and losses. Only then will we gain the understanding and healing we need. If that were to be a recommendation of the Inquiry, then we adoptees would feel that telling our very painful stories in submissions to the Inquiry will not have been in vain.

Yours sincerely,
Clare Graydon